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SUBJECT: GOC MISJUDGES PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IN JULY 1
VOTE ON BILATERAL MILITARY EXERCISES

1. (SBU) The GoC missed a constitutionally-required two-thirds majority in the Sabor by one vote July 1 when the Defense Ministry's request for approval of a number of upcoming international military exercises came to the agenda. Lack of approval means an exercise planned for September 2005 (Adriatic Sword) is likely to be cancelled unless the MoD can find a way to work around the Sabor vote. Under parliamentary rules, the issue cannot return to the Sabor agenda for 90 days. The vote also means that the GoC will not/not participate in the "Adriatic Engagement" exercise with its Adriatic Charter partners Macedonia and Albania, scheduled to start July 11.

2. (SBU) All signs pointed to approval as late as the night before the vote, but a GoC failure to physically round up the required number of supportive MPs, rather than any specific organized opposition to bilateral exercises, led to the defeat. The major opposition Social Democrats in fact supported the measure. According to press reports, some MOD sources put the best face on the lost vote by calling it a strong indicator that the constitutional provision requiring a super majority should be changed. With the traditional summer shut-down fast approaching and only one more week of the Sabor's session, resolution of this unforeseen mess is unlikely to come before September.

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